

LINCOLN'S POLICY.

HIS POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE RESTORATION OF VIRGINIA.

Major Stiles' Publication of Judge Henry W. Thomas' Testimony in the Gold Cases.

In the *Magazine of American History* for September there is an article by Major Robert Stiles, entitled "Lincoln's Restoration Policy for Virginia--the Truth Brought to Light."

During the years 1876-1879 the Major was associated with the Attorney-General of Virginia in the defence of what was known as the "Gold Cases." These were actions brought in the Federal Court here by the United States Government as plaintiff against ex-Governor William Smith and others, who had been officers of the Commonwealth in April, 1865, claiming of the defendants money of the State of Virginia, which the Governor had drawn out of the banks on the State of the evacuation of Richmond and paid to those persons on account of their official salaries.

In the course of the trial testimony was given by Governor Smith and ex-Auditor and ex-Judge Henry W. Thomas of great historical value and importance.

That of Judge Thomas was of special interest as bearing upon the question how far Mr. Lincoln was prepared to go and did actually go in putting into execution his admitted views in favor of the immediate restoration of the southern States, more especially Virginia, to the Union.

JUDGE THOMAS'S INTERVIEW.

The following is the substance of Judge Thomas's testimony as furnished by him to Major Stiles:

Early in April, when it was known, after the fall of Richmond, that Mr. Lincoln was coming to the city, I was called upon to give a public meeting with the view of expressing our views on the situation, and to declare our purpose to recognize all opposition to the restoration of the government under the authority of the Government of the United States. The meeting was held in the evening, and the proceedings were published in the *Richmond Dispatch*.

At this time, Mr. Myers (deceased), and myself were appointed a committee to confer with the President and submit the views of the people to him. We did so, and Mr. Lincoln was much pleased with the views presented by us. In the conversation I had with the President upon that occasion, reference was made to the consequences which might ensue from the condition in which we were placed--the absence of civil government, the demoralization prevailing, and our utter inability to control the passions and excited feelings of a part at least of our community--and I remarked: "Mr. President, I would all be much gratified if you would send Governor Pierpont here as early as possible, so that civil order may be re-established. I recollect Mr. Lincoln's action and utterances. He said he did not regard the division of Virginia as permanent, and that the matter, if tested in the courts, would, he thought, result in over-throwing it; that it could only be justified as a war measure, and therefore he did not want Mr. Pierpont. The Government that took Virginia back, and is the Government that alone can effect it. I shall appoint a committee for the purpose of summing up the views of the people of the State to meet on an early date in Richmond for the action, and I shall allow General Grant to issue such orders as he may deem proper. I presume the action you will need none in issuing General Lee's and I shall take care that you have entire control in the discharge of this duty, as also those who may summon, in relation to the Capitol. They must come here to the very place they went out of the Union to come back, and your people will doubtless all turn, and we shall soon have Old Virginia back again."

I recollect distinctly his replying to my suggestion that we could get the members of the existing Legislature in session without difficulty. "But he said," in the Government, that took the State out must bring her back. My impression is that Mr. Lincoln's policy was to have the Legislature meet on an early date in Richmond for the action, and I shall allow General Grant to issue such orders as he may deem proper. I presume the action you will need none in issuing General Lee's and I shall take care that you have entire control in the discharge of this duty, as also those who may summon, in relation to the Capitol. They must come here to the very place they went out of the Union to come back, and your people will doubtless all turn, and we shall soon have Old Virginia back again."

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were revoked. This was done immediately after his return."

QUOTATIONS.

Major Stiles quotes Admiral Porter's "Incidents of the Civil War," General Grant's Memoirs, and Mr. Stanton's testimony before a congressional committee, and produces also an extract from a recent pamphlet entitled "Reminiscences and Documents relating to the Civil War During the Year 1865," by Judge Campbell.

As an interesting and conclusive contribution to the history of this matter, Major Stiles cites various newspaper publications of the day. The earliest is from the *Evening Whip* of April 17th, (then a "loyal" paper) announcing that "an informal meeting of the members of the Legislature was held this morning for the consideration of the proposition of President Lincoln to reassemble the Legislature for the purpose of authorizing a convention to take Virginia back into the Union. It is said the proposition of the President was laid before the meeting, and 'an informal meeting' was appointed to take place at 4 P. M. to-day, to which time the meeting adjourned."

Next day the *Whip* makes a correction, saying there was no meeting of the Legislature or others, but simply an informal conference of private individuals, among whom were five or six members of the Legislature.

THE MOTIVE.

The motive of these gentlemen in coming together was to hear from Judge Campbell (who had had an interview with Mr. Lincoln) about one of the unbroken in the river) the terms upon which President Lincoln had expressed himself as willing that Virginia might return to the Union.

Messrs. Joseph B. Anderson, David I. Burr, N. P. Tyler, and H. C. Thomas were appointed a committee to inform the Legislature and Governor Smith of President Lincoln's terms, and Judge Campbell was requested to accompany the committee, and the *Whip* said they were to leave the State as soon as possible could be procured.

THE CALL.

The next publication of importance and the most important of all, says Major Stiles, appeared in the issues of the 12th and 13th. This was an address from a number of members of the Legislature and other citizens, who expressed the opinion that an immediate meeting of the General Assembly be summoned by the President, and that the members of the Legislature in Richmond in connection with the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor to their free deliberation upon public affairs, and to the departure of all its members under safe conduct have been obtained. The United States authorities will afford transportation free to any point under their control to any of the persons before mentioned. And the call went on to say:

The matters to be submitted to the Legislature are the restoration of the State of Virginia and the adjustment of questions involving the life, liberty, and property that have arisen in the State in consequence of the war. We, therefore, earnestly request the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and members of the Legislature to repair to this city by the 15th of April instant.

We understand that full protection to persons and property will be afforded in the State, and we recommend all citizens to remain in their homes and pursue their usual avocations, with confidence that they will not be interrupted. We earnestly solicit the attendance in Richmond on or before the 15th of April instant of the following persons, citizens of Virginia, to confer with us as to the best means of restoring peace to the State of Virginia. We have prepared safe conduct from the military authorities of the United States for those to enter the city and depart without molestation: Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, A. T. Cameron, William C. Rivers, John Letcher, A. B. H. Stuart, R. L. Montague, J. M. McKim, J. P. Roanoke, Alexander Hays, R. Johnson, Barbour, James Barbour, William H. Goheen, J. B. Baldwin, Thomas H. Chatham, S. D. Miller, Thomas J. Randolph, William F. Barry, R. A. Claybrook, John C. Hunter, William T. H. Epps, and these other persons for whom passports have been prepared and especially forwarded, that we consider it to be unnecessary to mention. (Signed) J. A. Marshall, Senator, Fauquier; James S. Mason, Senator, Loudoun; James Venable, Senator, Stafford; David I. Burr, of House of Delegates, Richmond city; David J. Saunders, of House of Delegates, Richmond city.

Mr. Bethel given an office.

Mr. John W. Fisher, collector of customs at the Richmond custom-house, yesterday appointed Mr. John S. Bethel, inspector, to succeed Mr. W. T. Holdsworth.

Mr. Bethel has been a nailer on Belle Isle for a great number of years and a life-long Republican. He first came into prominence in politics when the Reform movement struck Richmond, and he was chosen president of the Common Council elected by that party.

city; L. S. Hall, of House of Delegates, Westchester county; J. J. English, of House of Delegates, Chesterfield county; A. M. Kelly, of House of Delegates, Petersburg; R. W. Thomas, Second Auditor of Virginia; St. L. L. Monro, chief clerk Second Auditor's office; Joseph M. May, Mayor of Richmond; Robert Howard, clerk Hastings Court, Richmond city; Thomas U. Dudley, Sergeant-at-Arms, Circuit Court of Richmond; John A. Meredith, Judge of Circuit Court, Richmond; William H. Lyons, Judge of District Court, Richmond; Benjamin S. Keel, President of William and Mary College; Nat. Tyler, Editor *Richmond Enquirer*; H. F. Walker, publisher of *Examiner*; John A. Johnston, of Virginia; R. H. Rowan, Richmond; W. G. G. Smith, Richmond; Bayly, Richmond; P. J. Smith, Richmond; Franklin Stearns, Henry; John Lyons, Petersburg; Thomas H. Fawcett, Fauquier; William M. Harrison, Charles City; Cyrus Hall, Ritchie; Thomas W. Garnett, King and Queen; James A. Scott, Richmond.

Approved for publication by J. A. CAMPBELL, Major-General, commanding.

Richmond, Va., April 13, 1865.

And last of all from the *Whip* of Friday, April 14th, we copy the following military order:

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT VIRGINIA, RICHMOND, VA., APRIL 13, 1865.

Owing to recent events the permission for the reassembly of the Legislature recently acting should any of the gentlemen come in on good faith to carry out Mr. Lincoln's policy of immediate restoration, and they are requested to be furnished with passports to return to their homes.

Any of the persons named in the call signed by J. A. Campbell and others, who are found in the city twelve hours after the publication of this order, shall be subject to arrest, unless they are residents of the city.

Major-General commanding the Department.

PRIESTLY CHARGE.

After an examination of many authorities and an able and witty review of the case, Major Stiles finds--

1. As late as the afternoon of the 13th of April, 1865, General Weitzel and the other military authorities of the United States in Virginia were going on in good faith to carry out Mr. Lincoln's policy of immediate restoration, and they regarded the address or "call" of the 11th of April as a fair expression of that policy and the first step in execution of it.

2. Mr. Lincoln himself was not only the author and sponsor of that policy and that "call," but as late as the afternoon of the 13th of April, 1865--four days after the surrender of General Lee, and when he must be concluded to have seen the "call"--he had found no reason to abandon this policy or to repudiate this call.

3. To Edwin M. Stanton belongs the responsibility (or glory) of breaking up the policy of restoration, and inaugurating in its stead the policy of reconstruction.

The Virginia Medical Association meets at Roanoke September 3d, and as usual, will be attended by our doctor, who will deliver his annual address on the subject of "The State of the Medical Profession in Virginia."

Probably twenty-five or thirty physicians from this city will attend the meeting and combine a pleasure trip via the beautiful James River Valley line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, with its broad river plantations and large, roomy mansions and extensive lawns and orchards. The Chesapeake and Ohio will sell round-trip tickets to Roanoke, either via Lynchburg or Waynesboro', at nine dollars and fifteen cents, good to return until October 31st, and allow stop-over at any of its stations.

Frank Lee Richmond and Allegheny station daily at 9:15 A. M. and 10 P. M.

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